

The Repertory of the Comedie Francaise
from 1870 to 1900

by

A. Irene Goddard

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Thesis

THE REPERTORY OF THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE FROM 1870 to 1900

by

A. Irene Goddard

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In the history of drama the institution of the Comédie Française is unique; it has had a longer connected history than any other theater of the modern world. As a consequence of its being a lasting institution, it has been able to enrich itself with a vast dramatic repertory to which that of no other theater is comparable. This accumulation of plays began with those of Molière, Corneille, and Racine in the seventeenth century, continued through the brilliant period of the eighteenth, and, following the tradition of the Comédie Française, took what it considered the best of the nineteenth century.

To us a theater that has such an admirable repertory seems a great glory, but in France people are very critical of a great house like the "Maison de Molière", and it is surprising to find rather frequent criticisms of the plays in the repertory of the last half of the nineteenth century, and, especially, of the period from 1870 through 1900. An often repeated criticism was that the Comédie Française failed to adhere to the tradition of producing the plays of the classic writers, and one man went so far as to say that there was an absolute lack of repertory during this period. Sarcey, however, reviewing the history of the Comédie Française in his address given at the Gaiety Theater in London in 1879, represents the situation by saying that from the middle of the nineteenth century on, the Comédie Française had practiced more extensively than ever the tradition which Molière has described in the celebrated phrase, "Je reprends mon bien partout où je le trouve."

"The Repertory of the Comédie Française from 1870-1900", the theme of my thesis, suggested itself to me as a result of my curiosity about the criticisms of the repertory of this period and because of Sarcey's

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statement as to the actual situation. In writing upon this subject, I am making it my purpose to show the plays that were performed during this period by means of a table in which I have indicated the number of performances of each play in the repertory in each year of this period, with the total number of performances of each play during the years from 1870 through 1900, and to show also, in this way, the plays that were most often performed. And I believe I have proved, if I were to prove anything, by more detailed accounts of these plays in my conclusions, that these plays merited the popularity indicated by their totals in the table, and that the criticisms of the repertory during this period were unjust. The Comédie Française did continue to adhere to its tradition of producing only the best, both of the classic and contemporary plays, and became, in the words of Sarcey, a kind of museum where good pieces, brought out at no matter what theater, finally receive their consecration.

But, before presenting the table, a glance at the origin of the Comédie Française and a brief review of the history of its repertory are indispensable, I believe, to a more complete understanding of the Comédie Française and its repertory in this period from 1870 to 1900.

As far back as Corneille's "Le Cid", in which Richelieu was so deeply interested, the Court had shown a tendency to bring the theater under state control. With the death of Molière in 1673, the time for developing that design was drawing near. After his death, the company of the Palais-Royal, the theater of Molière, was divided into two bodies; one group went to the Hôtel de Bourgogne, and the other, under the direction of the dramatist's wife, took a house with a "salle" in the Rue Mazarine. Not long afterwards, Louis XIV ordered the Théâtre du Marais, third one

of the three large theaters existing in Paris at the time, to be closed, and the company was sent to join "Mlle." Molière in her new theater. This troupe, made up of the two groups, met with much success, especially in Thomas Corneille's "Circé" and Devisé's "Devineresse." In the summer of 1680, the king decreed that one company of actors should suffice for the amusements of the Court and the city, and ordered the companies of the Hôtel de Bourgogne and the theater in the Rue Mazarine to form themselves into one, and to settle themselves in the latter, the Hôtel Guénégaud. They were to be on terms of partnership, and his Majesty stated that no other troupe could play in the ville and faubourgs of Paris without his express permission. This troupe, as made up by Louis XIV himself, had twenty-seven players, of whom eighteen had a part, six a half part, and the others a quarter part of what was left in the treasury after other expenses had been paid. The players whose services were no longer desired received a pension. The first performance of this new company was on the 25th of August, 1680, before an audience that completely filled the theater. Two years later the king took upon himself the obligation of making the theater a yearly allowance of twelve thousand livres, and with that subvention the Comédie Française was established. It was thus that Louis XIV paid his tribute to Molière whom he had always protected, and of whom he had always made use. Undoubtedly it pleased him to cast the remnants of the Hôtel de Bourgogne into the troupe of the "Maison de Molière", which the French love to call the Comédie Française, because the struggle between the two theaters to gain the lead in the theatrical world had been a hard one. In speaking of this struggle it would not be fair to pass on without mentioning

Lagrange, an actor of little talent, but who loved Molière seriously and deeply. Next to Molière, Sarcey considers him the real founder of the institution, because it is in his diary that were entered the minute events of Molière's troupe, and, thanks to him, the company remained united before the public, while the Hôtel de Bourgogne struggled without success to regain the lead.

In the history of the repertory of the "Maison de Molière", the first important addition came to it when the king ordered the fusion of the Hôtel de Bourgogne with "Mlle." Molière's "salle." This action brought to it the repertories of Corneille and Racine, which had been the property of the closed theater. Molière, Corneille, and Racine had written a number of great works which gave to the stage a repertory which has never been surpassed in richness and beauty. This repertory was a treasure of inestimable value and an ever ready resource to the "troupe du roi", for it could always supply first-rate material in times of scarcity, and it has always been able to satisfy, in bad literary seasons, the public curiosity when it is tired and weary of novelties. Other dramatists of the 17th century, who, perhaps, should not go unmentioned, are Rotrou and Thomas Corneille, brother of the great poet, and whose "Circé" had so much success in "Mlle." Molière's "salle," and the writers of comedy Hauteroche, Scarron, and Boursault, whose "Crispin Médecin," "Don Japhet d'Arménie" and "Le Mercure Galant" respectively were still being presented at the Comédie Française during the period of 1870 through 1900.

The Comédie Française, in the eighteenth century, a period in which the theater was of utmost importance in the life of the people of every

class, added to the repertory of the immortal Molière, Corneille and Racine, an immense number of works of which some are veritable "chefs d'oeuvre", and others, less important, form what is called "le répertoire du second ordre." The linking of everything at the Comédie Française with tradition explains the small pieces that are found in the repertory, some of which are simply "vaudeville" and others, mere farces, which do not seem worthy of the "Maison de Molière."

As there was formerly only one theater in Paris which had been granted the privilege of giving dramatic performances, it was bound to open its doors to all kinds. Consequently, there is in the repertory of Molière, by the side of great five-act plays, "bouffonneries", which later on would be acted at the "Variétés" and the Palais-Royal, such as the "Médecin malgré lui", and the "Mariage forcé." But, as the Comédie Française became more important in the world of letters, it was obliged to put on a graver tone; it seemed offensive to hear the language of "Tabarin" on the same stage, where, on the previous night, a great poetic drama of Corneille had been heard. An incident of Parisian life in the eighteenth century illustrates the reason for this enforced change of tone.

Every year in Paris there were held on public squares two fairs, the Saint Laurent which was the more celebrated of the two, and the Saint Germain, which was the older. Crowds of mountebanks went to these, and among them a few stage managers. The latter came in contact with two privileges - if the actors sang, they had the Opéra down on them, for the Opéra had this right alone; if they had mere dialogue, the Comédie Française forced them to stop exhibiting speaking characters.

As the public in France has never been in favor of the idea of privileges, and is always on the side of free competition, the managers

of both theaters found an ally in the public - an ally as witty as it was noisy. Being forbidden to indulge in dialogues, these strolling companies resorted to mere gestures while a voice behind the scenes recited the piece as it went on, and the audience applauded loudly and fervently. If there was a moment of singing, a great placard was suddenly hoisted in front of the public, on which were written the words and music of the song, and the audience sang the forbidden air, while the players mimicked the words. The authorities added prohibition to prohibition, but ways of evading them were always found, and they were forced to allow new theaters to be established with privileges permitting them to play pieces of an inferior class.

From this time the Comédie Française closely confined itself to what are called the serious class of pieces. But, as long as this little war had lasted, it had followed in the track of Molière; it had mixed up farces, comic ballets, and even rhyming burlesques with great works. Thus, tradition was founded; it has been preserved. In addition to certain "bouffonneries" of the classic repertory, the Restoration and times following it to the present day have taken advantage of this liberty to produce light pieces like the "Petit Hôtel" of Meilhac and Halévy, and gay little comedies, almost farces, like "Voyage à Dieppe."

Another tradition was created by this controversy between the Comédie Française and the secondary theaters. The time came when the pieces of a secondary class, which flourished in the booths of the fair, were received officially on the stage of the "Italiens", which had just been dispossessed of its Italian "bouffes", because France had gradually forgotten their language, and fashion had deserted them. A number of ingenious, elegant and witty authors, among whom were Marivaux and Favart, wrote for this new theater several charming works, which were very successful.

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and witty authors, among whom were Molière and Bayard, wrote for this
new theater several charming works, which were very successful.

The Comédie Française borrowed from this new repertory some of its prettiest works. "Le jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard" which was first presented by the "Italiens" was borrowed to please a famous actress of the time, who thought she would be good in the principal character. The play, proving to be a success, was placed in the repertory of the "Maison de Molière." It betrays its origin, however, because it requires a good deal of burlesque acting, especially on the part of Pasquin. Such acting is unworthy of the Comédie Française, if it were not known that it first appeared on the stage of the "Italiens" where the part was played with the coarsest pantaloony. The play has been kept on the Comédie Française stage through the power of tradition.

The classical theater of the eighteenth century, which was very inferior to that of the century preceding it, had as its first representatives Crébillon, only one of whose plays, "Rhadamiste et Zénobie" remains in the repertory, and Voltaire, who occupies first place after Corneille and Racine. His finest pieces, "Zaïre", and "La Mort de César" are in the repertory.

At this period Sedaine has the honor of inaugurating a new type of theater; he made successful the "drame bourgeois" which Diderot tried to create. The two plays of Sedaine that are still in the repertory at the end of the nineteenth century are "Le Philosophe Sans le Savoir" and "La Gageure Imprévue."

The comedy of the eighteenth century is infinitely superior to its tragedy, and is splendidly illustrated in the pieces of Regnard, Dancourt, Lesage, Marivaux, Destouches, Piron, and Beaumarchais. Plays of all of these writers, with the exception of Destouches, appear in the repertory from 1870 through 1900.

The comedy of eighteenth-century society, together with the century's conception of art, is represented in a new way by Marivaux, who definitely leaves the tradition of Molière and is nearer Racine in his treatment of love. There is something thin and unsubstantial about these "spiderweb" comedies, as Voltaire called them, in which ghosts of the old regime seem to be treading an eternal minuet. But their pace is gallant, their sentiment sincere, their psychology convincing. The chief plays all repeat the same theme - "l'éternelle surprise de l'amour." The most popular is "Le Jeu de l'Amour et du Hasard", but several of his others continued to have outstanding success. In fact, the performances of his plays outnumber by far those of any of the other eighteenth century writers. The form of his plays is that of conventional prose comedies, with classical balance of characters and interests. But they have certain conspicuous merits of their own. Marivaux is a capable artist within his formal range. He may also be considered the founder of the modern drawing-room comedy, as it is later carried on in the work of Musset and Pailleron.

Lesage left a "comédie de caractères", "Turcaret", which is a masterpiece. This was preceded by "Crispin rival de son maître." It is generally conceded that Lesage, especially in "Turcaret", equals Molière. Piron's "Métromanie" completes the list of comedies prior to the Revolution, which appear in the repertory during the last part of the nineteenth century.

In this latter period it is not until 1900 that the play which is regarded as the first French national tragedy, "Charles IX", by Joseph Chénier, appears in the repertory. The Revolution produced only one other great dramatist, Népomucène Lemercier, the most original author in the history of the theater between 1789 and 1830. It is he who created

historical comedy in 1799 by his play "Pinto", but this play does not appear in the 1870-1900 repertory.

It was, however, Beaumarchais, the precursor of the modern theater who, after Molière and Regnard, gave new brilliancy to the "haute comédie" by "Le Barbier de Séville" and "Le Mariage de Figaro", two masterpieces of fine gaiety and cruel irony. Along with Marivaux his plays have the greatest number of performances by the Comédie Française of the pieces of the eighteenth century during the years from 1870 through 1900.

The theater was the last thing affected by the Revolution, and at the beginning of the nineteenth century, classical tragedy was still supreme. Napoleon fostered the Classical forms because of their reactionary tendency; he wished his Empire to resemble the old monarchy; Talma and other notable tragedians trod the boards in the high Roman fashion, declaiming Corneille, Racine, Voltaire, and their feeble imitators. Little visible change appeared until the twenties when the historical plays "Louis XI" and "Les Enfants d'Edouard" of Delavigne, the vivid and picturesque "Henri III et sa cour" of Dumas père, and the Shakespearean adaptations of Vigny bear witness to the new influence which serve as an introduction to Romantic sentiments and temperaments.

The Romantic drama became an accomplished fact with the triumph of the presentation of Victor Hugo's "Hernani" on the night of February 25, 1830. This piece carries out the author's declaration of a "mélange des genres", a phrase particularly applicable to the mingling of tragic and comic effects conspicuous in the Romantic drama, and his bold assertion "Tout ce qui est dans la nature est dans l'art." This phrase expresses the broad Romantic view in opposition to the Classic view of

"la belle nature." As regards drama and verse, the revolt is fundamentally against the neo-classical system. The forcible imposition of the unities, whether suitable or not, is characterized as a fetish of mediocrity and of slavish imitators. The only essential unity is that of action which may well exclude the other two. Hugo holds that rules are an impediment to genius. The other of the two most popular plays of Hugo is "Ruy Blas", which had nearly as many performances as "Hernani."

Dumas père, carries to an extreme the theories of the Romantic period. His preference was for historical subjects, which he recreates in his plays with an imagination both riotous and unrestrained. The best of his plays, well-plotted and grimly powerful, are more widely representative of the "drame" than in the lyrical production of Hugo.

Vigny is considered to have written the greatest play of the Romantic era in the "drame intime" of "Chatterton." This play and his "Quitte pour la peur", a graceful salon-comedy, appear only a few times in the repertory of 1870 through 1900.

The best plays of Musset were composed from 1830 to 1840. He wrote for his own satisfaction and for the reading public rather than for the stage. Only a few of his eighteen dramas were staged during his lifetime, but his dramatic stock was very high during the last part of the nineteenth century, and most of his plays appear in the repertory of that period.

During the first half of the nineteenth century the varied productivity of Eugène Scribe earned for him the post of chief entertainer. It was Scribe who created the modern "vaudeville" or light comedy of intrigue, and his mechanical skill supplied many of the principles of the "well-

made play", whose formula still subsists. Only three plays written by Scribe himself appear in the repertory from 1870-1900, "Le Verre d'eau", "Une Chaine", and "Bertrand et Raton", but there are four others written in collaboration, "Oscar" with Duveyrier, "Valérie" with Mélesville, and "Bataille de dames" and "Adrienne Lecouvreur" with Legouvé. These last two are among the plays having top numbers of performances. Successors to Scribe, under the Second Empire were Eugène Labiche, Meilhac and Halévy.

In 1843, upon the failure of Hugo's "Burgraves", another dramatic revolution took place. The violent situations, for some years past, dear to the Romantic School had produced a sensation of general fatigue. A reaction set in, and Ponsard, whose plays are a compromise between classical tragedy and the romantic drama, contributed to the success, ephemeral though it was, of the new school that was somewhat vaguely called the "école du bon sens." His best plays are "Le Lion Amoureux", "L'Honneur et L'Argent", and "Charlotte Corday", and are still in the repertory, although the last named does not appear until 1900.

This period was almost immediately replaced by that of writers who claim to observe the situations of daily life, to analyze the sentiments of some of its actors, and to reproduce the whole on the stage, in a sufficiently realistic setting.

The outstanding representatives of this period which leads into the repertory of 1870 through 1900 are Augier, Dumas fils, Sardou and Pailleron.

TABLE
of
THE REPERTORY OF THE COMÉDIE FRANÇAISE FROM 1870 to 1900

Note: The (1) after a play indicates that its first representation at the Comédie Française was in the year under which it is first listed.

1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	TOTAL
About et Najac Histoire ancienne.....	10	14	13	9	4	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	54
Adenis Diogene et Scapin(l)...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Aicard Mascarille(l)..... A Corneille(l)-Poésie. Othello(l)..... Hommage à Alexandre Dumas(l) - Poésie.... Smilis(l).....	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2 1 28 1 10
Alexis Celle qu'on n'épouse pas(l).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15
Allainval (d') L'Ecole des bourgeois.	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Amigues et Desboutin Maurice de Saxe(l)....	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22
Arnaud (Mlle.) Mademoiselle du Vigean(l).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	25
Aubryet Hommage à Racine(l) Poésie.....	-	1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2
Augé de Lassus Racine à Port-Royal(l) Le Vieux Corneille(l)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8 4
Augier L'Aventurière..... (continued on next page)	7	23	21	13	8	6	3	-	-	49	13	9	12	1	-	15	2	14	9	16	11	7	6	11	8	12	11	6	8	16	317

	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	TOTAL
Augier (continued)	6	2	-	-	-	22	8	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	55
Gabrielle.....	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14
Lions et renards.....	2	-	-	-	-	-	17	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	21
Paul Forestier.....	14	2	3	-	5	1	2	-	-	13	25	18	17	-	10	1	13	2	4	-	-	3	-	-	1	1	-	1	-	-	-	136
Le Post Scriptum.....	-	-	-	-	12	3	22	6	-	1	1	2	14	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18
La Ciguë.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	5	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	94
Philiberte.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	3	-	-	-	6	16	4	16	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	176
Les Fourchambault(1)..	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	128
Les Effrontés.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	67
Maître Guérin.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	43
Le Fils de Giboyer....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
Augier et Sandeau	-	24	39	25	13	13	16	9	4	21	32	13	9	11	18	7	8	13	-	8	5	12	11	10	4	-	20	13	20	14	24	416
Le Gendre de M.	-	-	-	2	42	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	44
Poirier.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
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Balzac et Pommier	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
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Le Baiser(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	2
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Barrière et Capendu	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	-	34
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Barrière et Murger La Vie de bohème(1)....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	13	-	8	61
Bayard et J. de Wailly Le mari à la campagne...	2	1	-	-	11	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10	5	1	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36
Beaumarchais Le Barbier de Séville... Le Mariage de Figaro....	3 6	1 13	- 8	- 11	4 -	- -	- -	18 -	6 -	2 14	- 6	2 13	- 8	- -	- 3	- 18	- 3	- 2	5 3	4 -	1 6	4 -	1 1	- -	1 -	6 -	- -	- -	6 -	- -	4 5	78 137
Becque Les Corbeaux(1)..... Les Honnêtes Femmes(1).. La Parisienne(1).....	- - -	- - -	- - -	- - -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	18 -	- -	- -	- 20	- 18	- 8	- 10	- 17	- 17	- -	- -	- 2	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	- -	18 93 17
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Bertheroy Aristophane et Molière(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	3	
Bertol-Graivil Maître et valets(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2

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Bouchor Hommage de la Muse tragique à Jean Racine (1)..... Conte de Noël(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 21	
Boursault Le Mercure galant.....	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	3	2	-	9	-	4	2	1	-	-	-	27	
Briex L'Evasion(1)..... Le Berceau(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	38	5 6	-	56 21	
Cadol La Grand 'maman(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	17	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	
Caraguel Le Bougeoir.....	3	3	-	4	1	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	43	4	3	-	-	-	-	1	5	3	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	91
Carcassonne Molière(1)-Poésie.....	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Case La Vassale(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	4	-	21	
Charles-Edmond La Bucheronne(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	
Chasles Conférence sur les oeuvres de Ponsard(1).	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Chénier Le Chant du départ(1).. Charles IX.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 2		
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Christophe Le Soleil des Morts(1)....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
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Claretie et Monval Compliment au public(1)...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
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Curel L'Amour brode(1)..... Les Fossiles (1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3 16	

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Deslandes Antoinette Rigaud(1)...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	40	23	1	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	66
Desvallières Une Matinée de Contrat (1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	7	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	
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Dorvigny La Parfaite égalité(1).	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
Doucet Les Ennemis de la Maison..... Le Baron de Lafleur.... Le Fruit Défendu.....	-	-	17	7	10	5	6	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	49 21 33
Dreyfus Une Rupture(1)..... Le Klephte(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	47	14	11	4	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	79 46
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Dumas (père)(continued) Les Demoiselles de Saint-Cyr..... L'Invitation à la valse Henri III et sa cour... Charles VII chez ses grands vassaux.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	96	11	2	1	-	9	2	-	-	-	4	7	6	-	74 109 90 14
Dumas (père) Durieu et A. Bourgeois Le Mari de la veuve.....	-	10	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	11	
Dumas (père) et Meurice Hamlet(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42	34	5	28	1	-	-	-	-	-	43	3	-	-	-	156	
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Dumas fils et Girardin Le Supplice d'une femme	8	1	11	17	11	7	5	2	-	3	-	-	10	12	11	14	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	3	4	-	-	-	142	
Duval Les Héritiers.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	12	1	-	-	-	-	13	
Duveyrier Faute de s'entendre.....	2	4	-	-	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	3	3	2	1	2	4	4	42		

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Erckmann et Chatrian	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	75	15	12	14	10	3	9	13	8	5	-	4	7	4	11	7	1	6	6	10	6	2	-	9	252
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Essarts (E. des)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
La France à Corneille(l)-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Poésie.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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Victor Hugo(l)-Poésie....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fabie'	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
A Corneille(l)-Poésie....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
A Racine(l)-Poésie.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Fabre d'Eglantine	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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Les Originaux.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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Les trois sultanes.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Ferrier	4	-	19	12	2	-	14	-	3	16	26	17	13	12	13	-	-	-	5	9	24	13	11	5	1	8	15	3	4	2	151	
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Feuillet	4	2	3	-	-	2	-	6	2	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	10	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	55
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	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	TOTAL
Feuillet (continued)																																
Le Village.....	1	-	-	12	33	10	14	5	18	2	5	49	8	9	-	-	3	8	1	4	6	-	3	-	-	-	-	5	5	7	3	214
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A Corneille(1)-Poésie...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Gautier																																
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Molière	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
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Musset A quoi rêvent les jeunes filles(l)..... Barberine(l)..... Un Caprice..... Les Caprices de Marianne..... Le Chandelier..... Il faut qu'une porte soit ouverte ou fermée..... Il ne faut jurer de rien..... La Nuit de Mai(l)..... La Nuit d'octobre..... On ne badine pas avec l'Amour.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
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	8	9	9	11	-	1	3	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	52	
	-	-	4	1	-	-	-	-	5	5	-	-	-	-	11	3	3	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42
	-	-	35	7	2	-	-	17	3	2	-	2	9	3	4	-	4	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	89
	7	10	5	2	-	2	4	-	-	4	28	4	5	-	-	14	21	9	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	121
	5	15	20	13	11	14	9	7	4	8	10	7	8	12	8	11	12	5	9	2	9	7	7	3	8	1	7	5	5	1	8	251	
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	2	3	-	11	-	3	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	8	43	
	-	7	18	14	-	13	2	3	6	4	-	11	7	10	17	6	1	14	2	5	3	11	2	2	2	2	5	-	-	-	8	175	

	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	TOTAL	
Nicolle Les Projets de ma tante.....	-	20	17	10	7	9	9	7	1	-	25	3	11	9	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	131	
Nittis Les Deux Cid(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Noël Plus qu'un homme(1) - Poésie.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1		
Noël et Paté Prologue à Bérénice(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	
Normand L'Amiral(1)..... La Douceur de croire (1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	6	1	2	-	-	23	
Pailleron Le Dernier quartier... L'Autre motif(1)..... Hélène(1)..... Petite Pluie(1)..... L'Étincelle(1)..... Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie(1)..... La Souris(1)..... Pendant le bal(1)..... Le Monde où l'on s'amuse(1)..... Cabotins! (1)..... Mieux vaut douceur(1) Mieux vaut violence(1)	9	9	5	1	6	6	3	13	-	-	5	19	11	29	16	10	4	13	5	19	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	254
	-	-	42	11	9	-	-	-	-	5	19	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	99
	-	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	10
	-	-	-	-	-	13	18	-	5	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	48
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	26	8	4	30	12	5	2	-	-	-	11	6	1	-	-	5	8	-	7	-	2	10	151
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	123	80	27	20	5	20	8	17	30	12	25	20	20	6	8	26	18	20	21	36	542	
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	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	41	24	-	-	9	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	74
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	102	8	14	-	53	2	-	-	15
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	135
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Parodi Rome vaincue(1)..... La Reine Juana(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	34	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	35
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	36

	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	TOTAL
Paté A Corneille(1)- Poésie..... A Molière(1)-Poésie..	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1 1
Patrat L'Anglais(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	1	-	-	-	-	-	3	4	10	11	2	1	1	46
Picard, Wafflard, et Fulgence Les Deux ménages.....	4	15	8	2	-	21	10	7	2	7	8	4	2	-	-	7	9	4	3	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	116
Picot A Corneille(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1
Piron La Métromanie.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6
Poinsinet (A.A.H.) Le Cercle.....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
Ponsard L'Honneur et l'argent Horace et Lydie..... Le Lion amoureux..... Charlotte Corday.....	4	3	4	11	10	1	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	42 37 10 19
Porto-Riche La Chance de Française (1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	27	4	4	4	4	4	1	5	1	-	58
Prével Un Mari qui pleure...	18	-	21	17	7	10	7	11	5	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	6	5	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	118
Racine Andromaque..... Athalie..... Bajazet..... Bérénice.....	2	4	25	6	3	-	-	10	5	4	1	2	-	-	-	-	10	4	9	4	2	5	1	1	6	7	2	2	-	2	8	125 50 22 18

	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	TOTAL	
Richepin (continued) Vers la joie(1)..... La Martyre(1)..... Prologue pour la réouverture de la Comédie-Française(1).	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	15 18	
Rivet Le Cimetière de Saint- Joseph(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	
Rivière La Parvenue.....	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
Rivollet Alkestis(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	13	13	
Rodenback Le Voile(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	18	5	2	1	-	-	-	26	
Roger-Milès Alceste converti(1)...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	
Rostand Les Romanesques(1)....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	19	5	1	-	1	10	2	38	
Sainte-Beuve Les Larmes de Racine..	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	
Samson La Famille Poisson....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22	
Sand (Mme.) Le Mariage de Victorine (1)..... Le Marquis de Villemer (1)..... François le Champi(1)	-	-	-	-	-	-	28	3	2	11	4	11	7	2	-	11	6	1	-	-	-	-	-	7	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	94	
	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	46	13	8	-	4	19	9	7	-	-	13	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	14	7	8	4	2	1	-	165 45

	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	TOTAL
Sandean Mlle. de la Seiglière	2	-	-	26	13	12	2	15	5	8	16	11	2	23	3	5	10	7	-	9	7	-	20	16	10	12	9	13	11	10	9	286
Sandean et Decourcelle Marcel(1).....	-	-	41	13	3	13	5	5	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	80	
Sardou Daniel Rochat(1)..... Les Pattes de mouche (1)..... Thermidor(1).....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	58	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	58 40 2	
Scarron Don Japhet d'Arménie.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	6	
Scribe Le Verre d'eau..... Une Chaîne..... Bertrand et Raton....	8	9	-	-	-	5	2	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	19	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22 37 27	
Scribe et Duveyrier Oscar.....	4	9	7	-	-	10	8	6	2	-	2	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	2	-	-	-	5	3	-	-	-	-	65	
Scribe et E. Legouvé Bataille de dames.... Adrienne Lecouvreur..	7	8	3	15	11	11	7	4	-	-	-	19	9	7	17	8	5	3	-	-	4	3	5	3	8	-	-	9	2	5	-	173 215
Scribe et Mélesville Valérie.....	2	7	5	3	6	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	23	
Second et Blerzy Un Baiser anonyme....	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	
Sedaine La Gageure imprévue.. Le Philosophe sans le savoir.....	-	-	-	-	8	3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	8	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	20 36	

TOTAL	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	
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13 18	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
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103	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	51	6	12	6	6	4	2	9	7	-	
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9	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
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42	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	26	8	3	2	3	-	-	-	-	-	
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Silvestre
Sapho(1).....
Tristan de Léonois
(1).....

Silvestre et E. Morand
Grisélidis(1).....

Soumet et Belmontet
Une Fête de Néron...

Souza
Toinette à Molière
(1) - Poésie.....

Sully Prudhomme
A Alfred de Vigny
(1) - Poésie.....

Theuriet et E. Morand
Raymonde(1).....

Thiboust et Scholl
Rosalinde(1).....

Tiercelin
A Corneille(1) -
Poésie.....
Le Rire de Molière
(1).....
L'Abbé Corneille(1).

Truffier
Petit Jean(1).....
La Phèdre de Pradon
(1).....
Les Deux Palémon(1).

An examination of the foregoing table reveals certain facts that are significant. It is, of course, evident that there can be no final judgments, except those dealing with the classic plays, from the conclusions based on the totals of a table which covers only a certain period of a long continuance of time. I believe it is possible, however, to point out why some of the contemporary plays were so popular. The reason was often the unusual portrayal of a character by an actor, but more frequently the reasons were the theme subject of the play and the dramatist's ability through his particular qualities to present the conditions and problems of the time in a manner that appealed to the public. These were the days following the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 when France was suffering from defeat and, in her struggle to overcome the effects of that disaster, was pervaded by a spirit of materialism and realism even greater than it had been during the Second Empire.

It is not my purpose to give too thorough critical analyses of these plays, nor is it feasible to consider them all, but observations of the principal characteristics of the representative ones and of the outstanding qualities of their writers show why they gave the greatest pleasure to the audiences of the Comédie Française and are worthy of being preserved by its repertory.

Of the four hundred and twenty-nine plays by two hundred and eight authors during the period of 1870 through 1900 only one, "Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie" by Pailleron, had over five hundred performances; "Le Gendre de M. Poirier" by Augier and Sandeau had four hundred and sixteen performances; four had over three hundred performances; namely, three hundred and seventy-eight performances of Molière's "Le Dépit Amoureux",

An examination of the foregoing facts reveals certain points that are
significant. It is of course evident that there was no final 1944-
series, except those dealing with the classic plays. From the conclusions
based on the failure of a table which covers only a certain period of a
long continuance of time, I believe it is possible, however, to obtain
and give some of the contemporary plays were so popular. The reason was
often the unusual popularity of a character of an actor, but more fre-
quently the reasons were the theme subject of the play and the dramatist's
ability through his particular qualities to present the conditions and
progress of the time in a manner that appealed to the public. These
were the plays following the Franco-Prussian war of 1870-71 when France
was suffering from defeat and, in her struggle to overcome the effects
of that disaster, was regarded by a public of revolution and reaction
even greater than it has been during the second Empire.
It is not my purpose to give too thorough critical analysis of these
plays, nor to be feasible to consider them all, but observations of the
principal characteristics of the representative ones and of the conditions
and qualities of their writers show why they gave the greatest pleasure
to the audience of the Comedie Francaise and the variety of being pre-
sented by the theatre.
Of the four hundred and twenty-nine plays by two hundred and eighty
authors during the period at 1870 through 1900 only one, "Le Bourgeois
Gentilhomme" by Moliere, had over five hundred performances; "Le
Gendre de St. Folien" by Legler and Sautou, and "Les Femmes de
Bonheur" had over three hundred performances; twenty, three
hundred and seventy-eight performances of Moliere's "Le Bourgeois
Gentilhomme".

three hundred and sixty-nine of Hugo's "Hernani", three hundred and nine of his "Ruy Blas", and three hundred and seventeen of Augier's "L'Aventurière"; there were twenty with more than two hundred performances, topped by Sandeau's "Mlle. de la Seiglière"; forty-four had more than one hundred performances; and sixty-six had more than fifty performances. Molière had the distinction of having twenty-six plays performed; Pailleron was next in line with twelve; Augier had eleven and two in collaboration with Sandeau; Dumas fils had eleven and one in collaboration with Girardin; Feuillet, eleven; Racine, eleven; Musset, ten; Coppée, eight; Richepin, seven; Corneille, six; Hugo, five.

Pailleron brought out "Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie" in 1881, and from that time to the end of the century the play had five hundred and forty-two performances. Why should this play have been so popular? Our own Brander Matthews feels that, clever as its author was without doubt, the vogue of the play seems accidental and inordinate. Many French critics consider that there was nothing accidental, however, about the time in which Pailleron chose to present this play to the public and that its success was the natural consequence of this shrewd choice of time. This was the period after the war of 1870 when politicians were buying their way into society, and the members of that society, represented in this play by the Comtesse de Céran, who has pushed her son into politics, were in return letting these politicians believe that they were gaining an entrance into the life of the aristocracy. Many political intrigues went on in the châteaux of these aristocrats, and the situation is well summed up in the words of Paul, one of the characters of "Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie", who has at last managed to receive an invitation to the

three hundred and fifty-nine of Kago's "Koranga", three hundred and five
of his "Koy Kian", and three hundred and seven of Kago's
"Koranga"; there were twenty with more than ten hundred performances,
four by Kago's "Koy Kian", and thirty-four had more than one
hundred performances; and sixty-six had more than fifty performances.
Kago had the distinction of having twenty-six plays performed; Kago
was next in line with twelve; Kago had eleven and ten in collaboration
with Kago; Kago's five had eleven and one in collaboration with Kago;
Kago's, eleven; Kago's, eleven; Kago's, ten; Kago's, eight; Kago's,
seven; Kago's, six; Kago's, five.
Kago's brought out "The House of the 'Koranga'" in 1881, and from
that time to the end of the century the play had five hundred and forty-
two performances. Why should this play have been so popular? Our own
brother Kago's says that, clever as the author was without doubt, the
vogue of the play seems accidental and fortuitous. Many Kago's critics
consider that there was nothing accidental, however, about the fact in
which Kago's chose to present this play to the public and that the
process was the natural consequence of the general choice of time. This
was the period after the war of 1870 when politicians were buying their
way into society, and the members of that society, represented in this
play by the Countess de Kago, who has pushed her way into politics, were
in return letting these politicians believe that they were gaining an
entrance into the life of the aristocracy. Many political intrigues
went on in the intervals of these entertainments, and the attention is well
summed up in the words of Kago, one of the characters of the play: "I
'on a 'Koranga', who has at last managed to acquire an invitation to the

home of the countess and who is seeking political advancement through a higher government official whom he expects to meet there: "c'est bien ici que se font, défont, et surfont les réputations, les situations et les élections, où, sous couleur de littérature et beaux-arts, les malins font leur affaire; c'est ici la petite porte des ministères, l'antichambre des académies, le laboratoire du succès", and he adds: "c'est un hôtel de Rambouillet en 1881." (Act I, Scene 2)

It is natural to put names to the characters in a play satirizing the society of the day, and, as a result of this, there arose a little scandal at which Pailleron pretended to be angry, but on which he had counted. "Il n'y aurait plus d'études de moeurs contemporaines possibles, écrit-il, avec cette tendance à feindre de voir partout des personnalités pour feindre ensuite de s'en indigner." Lacour, writing in the "Nouvelle Revue", considers this an argument of "exquise scélératesse." Pailleron claimed that the public found five different characters for each of his, but for one there was, however, only one. Those familiar with the life of Paris in 1880 felt that Bellac is a mild caricature of Caro, a spiritualist philosopher and popular lecturer. Or, if this one character does not represent one individual, it may well stand for the "type normalien" which the nineteenth century exalted. The Duchesse of Réville, another member of the aristocracy, but who does not lend her approval to the schemes of the countess and the intrigues of the day says of Bellac - "C'est un de ces abbés galants d'Ecole normale, courtisant les femmes, courtisé d'elles, et se poussant par ce moyen." One writer finds that Bellac is a very good semblance of Pailleron himself, who was a member of this society which he depicts so well, and who, having the fortunate personality which never makes enemies, triumphed especially with the charming

half of that society. In the play he created the character of Suzanne, for the very charming Jeanne Samary, and the other female roles brought much credit to the actresses Reichemberg and Brohan.

"Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie" is a good play and deserves, perhaps, a place of its own, because it is a combination of the "goût classique" and "le sens de la modernité." Pailleron knows how to observe and to depict with wit and humor what he has seen, although he does lack the force and energy of Augier. He possesses all the tricks of the dramatic trade, and his cleverness in the "mise en scène" is well illustrated by the delightful scene in the conservatory in the last act of the play. This scene brings gaiety to the play and always entertained the audiences of the theater. It is here that the countess and her aunt, the duchess, conceal themselves behind the plants to discover what pair of lovers are meeting at ten o'clock in the evening. An unsigned note had been found earlier in the day indicating that there was to be such a meeting, and great is the surprise of the two ladies to see all four of the young people in the play leave the salon in turn as the appointed hour approaches. And much greater is the surprise of these two ladies, as they are hidden behind the plants, to hear the sound of a kiss coming from an entirely different corner of the conservatory from the place of meeting named in the note. The comedy is clean and free from vulgarity and pessimism, and is one of the best of the nineteenth century. The fact that no great moral question is involved does not detract from its value which lies primarily in its qualities as a work of art and its picture of social customs.

Of Pailleron's other eleven plays in the repertory of this period "Le Dernier quartier" in verse had two hundred and fifty-four perform-

...of that society. In the play as written the character of Lawrence,
for the very charming, warm, sunny, and the other female roles brought
much credit to the actresses Katherine and Brown.
"The House of the Living Dead" is a good play and deserves, perhaps, a
place of its own. Because it is a combination of the "ghost story" and
"the man in the hat". Fallowell knows how to observe and to judge
with wit and humor what he has seen, although he does lack the force and
energy of August. He possesses all the tricks of the dramatic circle,
and his character in the "house of the living dead" is well illustrated by the de-
lightful scenes in the conservatory in the last act of the play. This
scene brings unity to the play and always attracted the audience of
the theater. It is here that the characters are best seen. The audience
conceal themselves behind the plants to discover what part of Lawrence
was meeting at ten o'clock in the evening. An unexpected note had been
found earlier in the day indicating that there was to be such a meeting,
and great is the surprise of the two ladies to see all four of the young
people in the play leave the salon in pairs as the appointed hour ap-
proaches. And much mystery is the surprise of these two ladies, as
they are hidden behind the plants, to hear the sound of a kiss coming
from an entirely different corner of the conservatory from the place
of meeting named in the note. The sound is given and then two voices
fly and disappear, and is one of the best of the theatrical century.
The fact that no great moral question is involved does not detract from
the value which this play brings to the theater as a work of art and its
picture of social customs.

Dr Fallowell's other known plays in the repertoire of this period
"The Better Quarter" in verse had two hundred and fifty-four actors.

ances which are due, I believe, to the interest in the revival of verse drama, and to the success of "Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie", because it had one hundred and thirteen of its performances in the year 1881. "La Souris" suffered from the comparison, and its chilly reception can be measured by the gibe of a fellow dramatist who said that Pailleron was a lucky fellow since he had two of his plays at the Théâtre Français at the same time - "La Souris" on the stage and "le monde où l'on s'ennuie" in the house.

Augier, with two plays to his credit, is second in the group of dramatists whose works led in popular favor at the Comédie Française during the years 1870-1900. His "Le Gendre de M. Poirier" had four hundred and sixteen performances, and "L'Aventurière", three hundred and seventeen. "Le Gendre de M. Poirier" is also signed by Jules Sandeau, upon whose novel, "Sacs et Parchemins", the play is founded, but the merit of the work is generally conceded to Augier.

The popularity of "Le Gendre de M. Poirier", which may be considered the model comedy of manners of the nineteenth century, is easily understood. While this comedy depicts the life of the nobility and the bourgeoisie under the Second Empire, it is just as true a picture of the life of those two classes in the years after 1870. In the role of M. Poirier, which Augier portrays with so much understanding, the bourgeois of this period could see himself, and one of his own problems was often that which is the subject of the play.

The theme of the play is based on an important problem in France after the Revolution; it is the old struggle between blood and wealth, between high birth and a full purse, and the ultimate uniting of these

which was due, I believe, to the interest in the revival of French
drama, and to the success of "Le Bourgeois de M. de la Roche", because it had

one hundred and thirteen of its performances in the year 1831. The
success of the play was due to the popularity of the author, and the early reception was
secured by the title of a famous dramatist who said that Voltaire was
a great fellow since he had two of his plays at the Theatre Francaise at
the same time - "Le Bourgeois de M. de la Roche" and "Le Bourgeois de M. de la Roche".
in the house.

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dramatists whose works led in popular favor at the Theatre Francaise dur-
ing the years 1830-1840. His "Le Bourgeois de M. de la Roche" had four hundred
and sixteen performances, and "Le Bourgeois de M. de la Roche" had seven-
teen. "Le Bourgeois de M. de la Roche" is also signed by Jules Sandeau, upon
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The theme of the play is based on an important problem in France
after the Revolution: it is the old struggle between blood and wealth,
between high birth and a full purse, and the ultimate victory of blood

two classes. The Marquis de Presles has the courage, refinement, and liberality of his class, but also the vices - its idleness, its arrogant pride, and its scorn for the materialistic things of life. M. Poirier is a shopkeeper who has amassed a fortune by honest diligence. He has common sense and good intentions, but he is vain and his ambitions make him ridiculous. He cares, moreover, too much for money and is too narrow. The clash between the bourgeois shopkeeper and his son-in-law comes to a climax in the following scene which illustrates the power of Augier.

"Gaston (le marquis). Arrive donc, Hector, arrive donc! Sais-tu pourquoi Jean Gaston de Presles a reçu trois coups d'arquebuse à la bataille d'Ivry? Sais-tu pourquoi François Gaston de Presles est monté le premier à l'assaut de La Rochelle? Pourquoi Louis Gaston de Presles s'est fait sauter à La Hogue? Pourquoi Philippe Gaston de Presles a pris deux drapeaux à Fontenoy? Pourquoi mon grand-père est mort à Quiberon? C'était pour que monsieur Poirier fût un jour pair de France et baron.

Le Duc. Que veux-tu dire?

Gaston. Voilà le secret du petit assaut qu'on m'a livré ce matin.

Le Duc. (à part) Je comprends!

Poirier. Savez-vous, monsieur le duc, pourquoi j'ai travaillé quatorze heures par jour pendant trente ans? pourquoi j'ai amassé, sou par sou, quatre millions, en me privant de tout? C'est afin que monsieur le marquis Gaston de Presles, qui n'est mort ni à Quiberon, ni à Fontenoy, ni à la Hogue, ni ailleurs, puisse mourir de vieillesse sur un lit de plume, après avoir passé sa vie à ne rien faire." (Act III, Scene 3.)

Augier has solved his problem by uniting the two classes through the young marquis' marriage with M. Poirier's daughter, Antoinette, whose

character is unexpectedly developed under the pressure of suffering, and by reforming Gaston. It is fortunate that Augier has not tried to reform M. Poirier, who stands as a master portrait in dramatic literature. The comedy is truly dramatic in every sense, and its tone is honest, healthy and hardy.

Augier's "L'Aventurière", is a verse drama. The theme of the play is a problem of great interest to the French. It is the threatening invasion of the irregular world into that of the family and of the law. The role of the beautiful courtesan Dona Clorinde was played by Sarah Bernhardt and, at a later time, by Mme. Bartet. The very fine performances of these two actresses contributed greatly to the success of the play, as did that of Febvre who was congratulated most heartily by Augier himself for his interpretation of Fabrice, the young man who had not been able to withstand the charms of Dona Clorinde. It is thus that Fabrice expresses his regret in "L'Aventurière" --

Ah! maudite à jamais soit la première femme
 Qui de ce droit chemin a détourné mon âme!
 Maudit soit le premier baiser qui m'a séduit!
 Maudit tout ce qui m'a loin de bonheur conduit!
 (Act IV, Scene 2)

The tribute of Filon, writing in 1898 his "De Dumas à Rostand" may well be an expression of the public's liking for this play. "Augier était-il un poète? Certainement non. Mais on peut dire que, dans le coin le plus retiré et le plus élevé de son être, quelque chose chantait. On a de lui quelques couplets, moitié tendres, moitié tristes, que je n'entends jamais sans un léger frisson de plaisir. A certaines heures, sa gaîté gauloise se teintait aux couleurs changeantes du caprice et de la fantaisie de Musset. C'est dans une de ces heures-là qu'il composa

'L'Aventurière.' Jouée devant les banquettes, pendant les jours les plus troublés de 1848, cette charmante comédie, retouchée par l'auteur, a surnagé. Elle est devenue en quelque sorte classique et mérite de l'être. Vous y reconnaîtrez encore les bourgeois et les bohèmes de l'époque, mais ils sont galamment déguisés, et ce qu'ils disent méritait vraiment d'être dit en vers."

It is understandable that Molière should be foremost in the number of plays performed, and, with the large number of their performances, thus exceed all others. Just why "Le Dépit Amoureux", of all his comedies, is his top play at this period in the repertory is not so easily understood. One can only conjecture that the subject matter of the comedy, which deals with love, always a favorite theme with French audiences, and the amusing role of the comic servant, so often found in Molière, are the reasons for its popularity. As the title suggests, the plot centers about a quarrel between lovers. Not only is there a quarrel between Eraste and Lucile, the leading characters, but also between their servants, Gros-René and Marinette. The situations become such a complication of errors that there seems no visible disentangling. Much of this complication is due to Gros-René, who urges his master on in his quarrel with Lucile, because he is angry with women in general on account of his own tiff with Marinette. The success of the play depends to a great extent on the actor who plays the role of the servant, and, without doubt, its popularity in the 1870-1900 repertory was due largely to Coquelin who gave a perfect performance of Gros-René.

Hugo, also, has two plays in the group of plays of over three hundred performances. His "Hernani" has three hundred and sixty-nine and "Ruy

"Blas" three hundred and nine. There are, undoubtedly, many different reasons for their popularity. The plays may have demerits as dramatic compositions, but they are certainly filled with beautiful poetry by one of the master lyricists of the world. "Hernani" abounds in pathetic and moving situations, which keep the audience moved, thrilled, and excited, but, at the same time, disarms any thought of criticism by its poetic language and picturesqueness. One must agree with Brander Matthews that lovely are the lines in which the king, Don Carlos, when he, having been elected emperor, pardons his rival, gives him Dona Sol to wed, and finally bestows the accolade: -

....."je te fais chevalier.
Mais tu l'as, le plus doux et le plus beau collier,
Celui que je n'ai pas, qui manque au rang suprême,
Les deux bras d'une femme aimée et qui vous aime!
Ah, tu vas être heureux; - moi je suis empereur."
(Act IV, Scene 4)

And beautiful is the lyricism of the last lines of the play after Hernani and Dona Sol have taken the fatal poison. Hernani falls back; and Don Ruy Gomez, lifting his head, declares him dead; but Dona Sol will not have it so: -

....."Mort! non pas!nous dormons.
Il dort! c'est mon époux, vois-tu, nous nous aimons,
Nous sommes couchés là. C'est notre nuit de nocce.
Ne le réveillez pas, seigneur duc de Mendoce.
Il est las....Mon amour, tiens-toi vers moi tourné,
Plus près.....plus près encore....."
(Act V, Scene 6)

In "Ruy Blas", the better constructed of the two dramas, the humor, especially in the character of Don César, is superior to that of any other piece of Hugo, and has done much to popularize it on the stage. There is true comedy in Hugo's conception of Don César de Bazar; and very amusing and comic is the scene in the fourth act when he drops into the house occu-

pied by Ruy Blas (who has assumed the name of Don César), and is astonished at the adventures which happen to him, and does in everything the exact opposite of what would be done by Ruy Blas, for whom the adventures were intended.

The comic element is well illustrated by the following part of the scene. Becoming bored "horriblement", as he says, he begins to look around the room. He catches sight of a little closet that he thinks looks like a bookcase. Upon opening it, he discovers that it is a well-stocked food closet with "Six flacons bien rangés." He examines the bottles one after the other, and decides that the choice of wine is good and that the cupboard is a creditable one. Then come the lines in which he still carries out the idea that it was a bookcase that he had discovered, and he reads the labels on the bottles as if they were titles of books. He takes one of the bottles.....

"Lisons d'abord ceci,

(Il emplit le verre, et boit d'un trait.)

C'est une oeuvre admirable
De ce fameux poète appelé le soleil!
Xérès-des-Chevaliers n'a rien de plus vermeil.

(Il s'assied, se verse un second verre et boit.)

Quel livre vaut cela? Trouvez-moi quelque chose
De plus spiritueux!

(Il boit.)

Ah Dieu, cela repose!
Mangeons."

That this drama has not quite equalled "Hernani" in public favor is owing, without doubt, to the superiority of the first play in sheer lyric beauty, and is clear proof that this poetry is the predominant merit of Hugo's theater.

plied by Mr. Hiss (who has received the same at San Francisco), will be shown
that at the adventure which happened to him, and then to everything the
event appeared to him as if it were by Mr. Hiss, for when the adventure
was finished.

The main element is well illustrated by the following part of the
account. Incoming boats "arrived", as he says, he began to look
around the room. He noticed a light of a little closer to the
back like a boatman. Then opening it, he discovered that it is a self-
steering boat called "the Hiss boat". He examined the
boat as after the other, and decided that the choice of him is good
and that the approach is a creditable one. Then came the time in which
he still noticed out the boat that it was a boatman that he had known
before, and he found the boat on the boatman as if they were still out
together. He takes one of the boats.....

"Hiss boat" said.

(It is said to be, at last it is said.)

"Get me some advice
to be taken from the boatman
to be taken from the boatman
to be taken from the boatman."

(It is said, as there is some more to say.)

"Get me some advice
to be taken from the boatman
to be taken from the boatman."

(It is said.)

An Hiss boatman
to be taken from the boatman
to be taken from the boatman."

That this boatman has not yet been named "Hiss" in public is only
about doubt, to the superiority of the first ship in the world.
and is that great that the boatman is the boatman's boat of Hiss's

boatman.

Then, as Brander Matthews says, Hugo's glory does not depend on his dramas, nor upon his work in any single department of literature; literature was too small to hold him, and the finest of him was outside of it. The best part of him got out into life, and what he did in politics and philanthropy is on record. It is to be noted that he returned from exile in September 1870, and this fact, in all probability, influenced the number of representations of these two plays, which are his best. In this way the people could show their appreciation to him, although it is a certain thing that Romanticism had run its course. After his death, many who had kept silent out of deference to him spoke out boldly. Other reasons for the large number of performances of his plays were that the fiftieth anniversary of the first performance of "Hernani" was approaching and did occur on February 25, 1880, which was the occasion of a celebration in the Comédie Française, and that, at no time, did the "Maison de Molière" have a more excellent group of actors. One writer tells us that after a performance of "Ruy Blas" when Hugo was receiving congratulations in the "foyer des artistes" of the theater, he said, pointing at Sarah Bernhardt and Mounet-Sully, "Voilà ceux qu'il faut féliciter."

The number of plays of the classic writers appearing in the repertory of 1870-1900 certainly prevents any criticism that the Comédie Française does not adhere to tradition in presenting their plays in this period. Two hundred years after the origin of the "Maison de Molière", the plays of Corneille, Racine, and Molière outnumber by far the plays of any other three writers in the years 1870-1900. There are six plays of Corneille with one hundred and forty-five performances as the leading figure; eleven plays of Racine, with one hundred and thirty-two as the greatest number

Then, we should remember that, though a play does not depend on its
success, nor upon its work in any single department of literature; literature
and we shall be told that, and the object of his own writing of it. The
best part of his work was his life, and what he did in politics and literature
theory is on record. It is to be noted that he returned from exile in
September 1870, and that, in all probability, he returned the subject of
representations of these two plays, which was his first. In this way the
people would also have suggested to him, although it is a certain fact
that he had not yet seen the course. After his death, many who had not
attempted to do so, to his great regret. Other reasons for the
large number of performances of his plays were that the French audience
very of the first performance of "Hernani" was exceptional and the scene
on February 25, 1830, which was the occasion of a revolution in the
French Republic, and that at no time did the "Nation de Paris" have
a more excellent group of actors. The writer tells us that after a
performance of "Hernani" when they were working on the occasion in the
"Hernani" of the theatre, he said, "I was as much surprised
and honest as I, 'Hernani' was not a play."

The number of plays of the classic writers appearing in the repertoire
of 1870-1880 certainly presents an interesting study. The French Republic
does not adhere to tradition in presenting their plays in the period. The
hundred years after the birth of the "Nation de Paris", the plays of
Corneille, Racine, and Voltaire continued to be the plays of any other
three writers in the years 1870-1880. There are six plays of Corneille
with one hundred and forty-five performances in the French theatre; eleven
plays of Racine, with one hundred and thirty-two as the greatest number

of performances of any one play; and twenty-six plays of Molière, with one play having three hundred and seventy-eight performances, six plays having more than two hundred performances, and five having more than one hundred.

Two elements explain, without doubt, the outstanding position of these plays in the repertory; the first, which was the exceptional troupe (Got, Delaunay, Febvre, Mounet-Sully, Worms, les Coquelins, les Brohans, M. Croizette, S. Bernhardt, followed upon her departure from the Comédie Française by Mme. Bartet) under the skillful direction of Perrin and later of Claretie; and the second, which is of utmost importance, is the appeal of the qualities of these plays to the audiences of every period. It is of interest, I think, to name the plays that were produced the greatest number of times.

Corneille's "Le Cid" had one hundred and forty-five performances; "Le Menteur", ninety-four; "Horace", seventy-four; and "Polyeucte", fifty-nine. Racine's "Les Plaideurs" is at the top of his list with the figure, one hundred and thirty-two; "Andromaque", with one hundred and twenty-five; "Britannicus", ninety-nine; "Phèdre", eighty-seven and "Athalie", fifty. For those who have an especial interest in Sarah Bernhardt it can be noted here that during her stay at the Comédie Française from 1872-1880 she appeared in thirty of the performances of "Andromaque" and in forty-one of "Phèdre." Molière's "Le Dépit Amoureux", of which I have spoken elsewhere, had three hundred and seventy-eight performances; "Le Malade Imaginaire", two hundred and eighty-five; "Le Mariage forcé", two hundred and eighty; "Tartuffe", two hundred and fifty-seven; "L'Avare", two hundred and fifty; "Les Précieuses Ridicules", two hundred and twenty; "Les Femmes Savantes", two hundred and ten; "Le Médecin malgré lui", one

hundred and seventy-four; "Le Misanthrope", one hundred and seventy-one; "Les Fourberies de Scapin", one hundred and sixty-seven; "L'Ecole des femmes", one hundred and twenty-four; "L'Etourdi", one hundred and ten; and of Molière's fourteen other plays in the repertory, those with more than fifty performances were "L'Amphitryon", "Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme" and "M. de Pourceaugnac."

Upon viewing this very great number of productions of Molière's plays, there is brought to mind the paradoxical petition of Léon Gozlan to protest against the too great number of the representations of the plays of Molière "de ce Molière qui empêche les auteurs vivants de prendre leur place au soleil de la rampe." And one can hardly wonder at his feeling thus, for Molière, from the beginning of the "Maison de Molière" in 1680 through 1900, was played 20,290 times, or, in other words, by giving two plays a day it would have taken the Comédie Française twenty-eight years to reach that total.

The plays of the contemporary writers of the 1870-1900 repertory with the greatest number of representations are those of Augier and Dumas fils, two of the three chief dramatists of the period of Realism in vogue at this time. Sardou, the third of these dramatists, does not have any considerable place in the repertory of this period. It was felt that he wrote principally to make money and to please the taste of the hour, and when he tried to handle so important a topic as that in "Daniel Rochat", which is one of his three plays in the repertory, it was a little difficult to take him seriously. In this play he considered the so-called conflict of religion and science, and, in spite of no lack of his usual cleverness, he did not present the topic with conviction, sincerity or truth. This

...and twenty-four; "The Hunchback", the hundred and twenty-one;
"The Fortunes of Sancho", one hundred and thirty-seven; "The Hunchback"
...one hundred and twenty-four; "The Hunchback", one hundred and ten;
and of Voltaire's fourteen plays in the repository, those with more
than fifty performances were "The Hunchback", "The Fortunes of Sancho",
and "The Hunchback".

Upon viewing this very great number of productions of Voltaire's
plays, there is brought to mind the paradoxical position of Voltaire
is placed against the too great number of the representations of the
plays of Voltaire "as on Voltaire and especially his entire works he
proves that there are still to be seen." And one can hardly wonder
at his feeling that, for Voltaire, from the beginning of the "Hunchback"
Voltaire" in 1733 through 1750, was played 20,000 times, or, in other
words, by giving two plays a day it would have taken the whole of France
twenty-eight years to reach that total.

The plays of the contemporary writers of the 18th-19th century with
the greatest number of representations are those of Molière and Racine, the
two of the names called the greatest of the period of Voltaire in France. In this
time, however, the total of these dramatists, does not have any comparison
like place in the repository of this period. It was felt that the more
principally to make money and to please the taste of the public, and when the
tried to handle so important a topic as that in "The Hunchback", with
is one of his first plays in the repository, it was a little different to
this his position. In this play he considered the so-called conflict
of religion and science, and, in spite of his lack of his usual resources,
he did not prevent the play with conviction, especially in France.

is, without doubt, the reason for the few performances of the play at the Comédie Française, although his extraordinary cleverness, his undeniable wit, and his many gifts in various directions had brought him enormous success in other theaters in Paris. One of the chief functions of the theater should be to give a history of the ideas and sentiments of the times. From Sardou, one learns nothing of the thoughts and feelings of the men of his day, but in Augier and Dumas fils one finds an epoch, a society, a state of mind of France of forty years' duration.

Augier and Dumas fils were honest of purpose; they tended to make the painting of manners and character or the reform of society their concern. From them we have a definite picture of the problems that were occupying the minds of the men of their period. Augier, descending from the school of Beaumarchais and Molière, depicted with sense and humor the manners of the middle classes. For him the theater was not merely a place of entertainment; it was an institution for agreeably instructing the people. It need not commend any ascetic habit of life, but it should demonstrate the folly of vice and the satisfactions to be derived from rational conduct. He urged the morally obvious, upholding the nobility of labor, the sanctity of the home, and the duty of patriotism. He denounced pride of wealth and station, the conscienceless scramble for money, the malign power of the press, and the danger of a conflict between classes. He drew with skill his themes, settings, and characters from real life. In this way he became one of the founders of dramatic realism.

Augier's attitude toward various problems is shown specifically in his eleven plays that appear in the repertory of 1870-1900. In "L'Aventurière", he attacked the problem of the courtesan; in "Les

is, without doubt, the reason for the few productions of the play at the
London Theatre, although the extraordinary character, the emotional
and the moral value in various directions and the numerous
aspects in other respects in fact. One of the chief functions of the
theater should be to show a history of the times and sentiments of the
times. From London, one learns nothing of the thoughts and feelings
of the men of his day, but in London and there this one finds an epoch,
a society, a state of mind of France of forty years' duration.
Angier and Jones this were honest of purpose; they wished to make the
pointing of nature and character on the nature of society their purpose.
That they at times a definite picture of the problems that were confronting
the minds of the men of their period. Angier, according to the school
of Naturalists and Realists, inclined with reason and nature the nature of
the middle classes. For him the theater was not merely a place of am-
usement; it was an institution for seriously instructing the people.
It need not comment any realistic ideal of life, but it should demonstrate
the folly of vice and the satisfaction to be derived from rational con-
duct. He used the social system, something the necessity of labor,
the necessity of the home, and the duty of patriotism. He demanded
purity of style and action, the consciousness of struggle for truth, the
unified power of the press, and the danger of a conflict between classes.
He drew with skill his themes, settings, and characters from real life.
In this way he became one of the leaders of dramatic realism.
Angier's attitude toward various problems is shown specifically in
his eleven plays that appear in the repertoire of 1870-1880. In
"L'Inventeur", he attacked the problem of the inventor; in "Les

Fourchambault", he did not plead any cause, but gave a large tableau of family complications; in "Les Effrontés", he decried the rich who, to further their schemes, would use the corrupt and dependent poor; in "Jean de Thommeray", written in collaboration with Sandeau, the regeneration of the hero was effected through patriotism, a motive suggested by the war of 1870. In his masterpiece, "Le Gendre de M. Poirier", also written with Sandeau, and which I have taken up in the group of top-ranking plays, he exhibited the conflict between honor and money, the rivalry of the nobility and the bourgeoisie. Thus, all the strong, vigorous, honest comedies of Augier take up the problems of his day and kept them foremost in popular favor.

Dumas fils, unlike Augier, continued no tradition - he derived from no one. He expressed himself, and with emphasis; he was a personal force. The emphasis upon ideas, so apparent in the dramas of Augier, became even more evident in those of Dumas fils. It was he who established the vogue of the "pièce à thèse" and first made extensive use of the "raisonneur" to expound his doctrines. The success of "La Dame aux Camélias" convinced Dumas that he was not only a playwright but a moralist with a mission. "It is impossible," he wrote, "for a man to make use of the stage for the expression of his thoughts, and who is endowed with observation, reflection, a sense of justice and the ideal, not to come by degrees to the treatment in the theater of fundamental questions which interest all humanity." Dumas thought of himself as a lay preacher. He strove for the salvation of society, and he considered that the drama should be placed in the service of important social reforms and the high hopes of the soul. Domestic and social conflicts were his theme, and, above all, illicit love. The theses of Dumas were not obtruded to the point of spoiling his plays as theatrical

...and his not least my own, but gave a more rounded of finally
...in "The House of the Dead", he described the rich who, to further their
...and the street and underground court in "Jean de la Harpe",
...the regeneration of the city was ef-
...the war of 1870. In his
...also written with Sandeau, and which
I have taken up in the group of topographical plays, he exhibited the conflict
between power and money, the rivalry of the nobility and the bourgeoisie.
Thus, all the strong, vigorous, honest characters of higher rank in the group
lack of his day and kept their position in popular favor.
These five, unlike Wagner, continued to live in the - he derived from an
one. He expressed himself, and also explicitly; he was a personal force.
The emphasis was placed, as apparent in the drama of Wagner, on the
were evident in those of these five. It was he who established the voice
of the "Germanic" and lived with extensive use of the "Germanic" to
expressed in a dramatic. The process of "the House of the Dead" consisted
...that he was not only a playwright but a dramatist with a mission.
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of these were not obtained in the point of seeing his plays as theatrical

entertainments. For many years his works could be enjoyed apart from their doctrine. Yet the social note may be detected in them all. This concern with the problems and characters from real life place him with Augier as one of the founders of realistic drama.

The problems in the eleven plays of Dumas fils in the 1870-1900 repertory give evidence of this social note. This can be shown in a summary of the subjects of the four top-ranking ones. In "L'Etrangère" venal marriage was the target; in this play the author displayed the sufferings of an heiress lured by an American adventuress into a match with a reprobate duke, but recompensed, after the duke has fallen in a duel, by being wed to an honest engineer. This was a play of very poor caliber, and its large number of performances in the Comédie Française was due to Sarah Bernhardt who gave eighty-three in one year. In "Denise" the theme was that the woman with a past may yet have a future, provided that her heart be as tender as that of Denise and the soul of her lover be philosophic; in "Francillon", that of the inevitability of a double standard of conduct for the sexes; in "Le Demi-Monde" there was depicted a world of women exiled from polite society, hoping for reinstatement through marriage, but doomed to defeat.

"Le Demi-Monde", Dumas' most popular play in this period, is a model of his type of the "pièce à thèse", and it is in this play that he makes his first use of the "raisonneur." The social problem that he attacks in this play is that of the woman for whom he has invented the term "demi-monde." By this phrase he meant, not the class of courtesans but the class of exiles from society. The people of the half-world are those who have fallen from grace; they are not those who have always been

outcasts and sinners. It is, for the most part, an association of repudiated wives. When de Jalin, the witty Parisian who is "raisonneur" of the play, is trying to dissuade de Nanjac, the soldier just returned from Algeria, from marrying Suzanne d'Ange, the adventuress whom he knows all too well, he describes the "demi-monde" in the following manner: "The first wife who was thrust from the door went to hide her shame, and weep over her sin, in the most sombre retreat she could find; but.....the second? The second set out to find the first; and when they were two, they called their fault a misfortune, and their crime an error; and they began to console and excuse each other. When they were three, they invited each other to dinner. When they were four, they had a quadrille." As the later recruits, imitation wives, and brevet wives come on, de Jalin accounts for them in this fashion: "in short, all the women who wish to have it believed that they have been what they are not, and who do not wish to appear what they are." There is a distinct boundary line between this society and that of the venal courtesans who have since taken upon themselves the title of "demi-monde", and again between "le demi-monde" and the real "monde." "The 'demi-monde'," says de Jalin, "is to be known best of all by the absence of the husband."

"Le Demi-Monde" is a masterly play and stands the threefold test: it is good in plot, in dialogue, and in character. One follows with interest the story which sets forth the struggles of a clever woman, Suzanne d'Ange, calling herself a baroness, to get out of her difficulties in this doubtful world of trouble into matrimonial respectability. The dialogue is brilliant and metallic, as is shown by the most celebrated speech in the comedy in which de Jalin likens the "demi-monde" to a basket of peaches in the window of a Parisian fruit store. The characters are well drawn against the dim

background of a dubious society, and contrasted with utmost skill. M. de Nanjac's impetuosity is well contrasted by the coolness of M. de Jalin. The chief character of the comedy, Suzanne, is a very well depicted character, almost worthy of a place by the side of Dona Clorinde in Augier's "L'Aventurière."

The qualities of Dumas that are found in this play are representative of those in his other plays, and made him very popular with the audiences of the Comédie Française. This popularity caused Augier to complain at times that his plays were being sacrificed to those of Dumas.

Thus, Augier and Dumas fils together established the Realistic drama in their successful endeavor "de porter au théâtre une peinture exacte de l'Humanité, et des cas de conscience." For this reason their plays appealed to the French audiences, because the French have always been realists and moralists. They inherited their realism from the "génie latin"; they were realists in their "fabliaux" and novels in the middle ages; they have been so from century to century with Rabelais, Molière, Diderot, Balzac. They are realists even in religion and in poetry, and they carry their realism through and beyond the realm of idealism, because realism is for them, as Filon says, "une manière d'être encore plus qu'une manière de penser." They turn away from it; they always come back to it. And, because these two writers were moralists, they gave the French, in this period after the defeat of 1870, when they were in need of just such mental sustenance, the plays which satisfied this characteristic of the moralist that is part of every Frenchman. The French have always liked to look within themselves, to reason about their feelings and their passions. It is by doing this that they have acquired their agility

and subtlety of mind, and likewise the gift of emotion for which foreigners reproach them or envy them. In their sermons, in their novels, in their history, they are still and always moralists. Augier and Dumas gave them the opportunity to be moralists in their plays.

"La Fille de Roland", a verse drama which Bornier had been inspired to write by the poem whose hallowed legend is so dear to the hearts of the French, was received with great enthusiasm in 1875. Its lyricism and imagination recalled those qualities of Hugo and were a welcome change from the realism of the robust prose dramas which were occupying the stage at this time. The subject is taken from the heroic epic poem "La Chanson de Roland", in which legend and history are sufficiently confused to allow the dramatist a free hand. In his play Bornier departs from the "Chanson" in several particulars. Ganelon, the traitor, did not die; his life was saved by the monks. He had married the widow of Milon, sister of Charlemagne and mother of Roland. He had by her a son, Gerald. Roland, who had been unmarried in the "Chanson", had married Aude and, when she died on hearing of the death of the knight, she left a daughter Berthe who was adopted by Charlemagne. Ganelon was therefore step-father to Roland, who was half brother of Gerald. The daughter of Roland is, therefore, the niece of Gerald. Gerald has been brought up in ignorance of the whole situation because his father Ganelon had assumed the title of Count Amaury to keep secret his identity. The romance of Gerald and Berthe, who meet at the court of Charlemagne, creates an unusual dramatic circumstance which absorbs the interest of the spectator. The heroic deed of Gerald in slaying Noéthold, the Saracen, and the noble sentiments of Charlemagne express the spirit that has always animated France in all ages and in spite of reverses.

Another factor in the success of the play was its presentation at a time just after the war of 1870 when its fire and ardent patriotism aroused tremendous enthusiasm. The public was very chauvinistic at this period and saw constant references to contemporary events and to the impending revenge for the defeat of 1871 which everyone desired. It was natural that such a line as "Tout homme a deux pays, le sien et puis la France!", and passages like the following should strike responsive chords in the hearts of the French people:

"O France! douce France! o ma France bénie!
 Rien n'épuisera donc ta force et ton génie!
 Terre du dévouement, de l'honneur, de la foi;
 Il ne faut donc jamais désespérer de toi,
 Puisque, malgré tes jours de deuil et de misère,
 Tu trouves un héros dès qu'il est nécessaire!"
 (Act III, Scene 5)

As a last group of high-ranking plays, there are several curtain-raisers. The curtain-raiser is one of the essential features of the Comédie Française. It is a short one-act play "par laquelle on commence une soirée théâtrale", and described by Gautier as "une petite comédie macaronique, élégante et fluette." Originally the purpose of these little plays was to keep the early arrivals at the theater entertained so that the curtain would not have to be raised for the play of the evening until all of the audience was in its place. If the main play was to be quite a serious one, a very frivolous curtain-raiser preceded it; if the play was to be lighter in tone, the curtain-raiser was more grave. As time went on, these little plays came to be more appreciated, and some of them attracted the people by their own worth.

Among the most popular ones are Molière's "Le Mariage forcé", Feuillet's "Le Village", Ferrier's "Chez L'Avocat", and Coppée's "Le

Luthier de Crémone." The plots of these little plays and their author's ability to make them depict the life and spirit of the day were the usual reasons for their being liked by the audiences of the Comédie Française.

"Le Mariage forcé" is a portrayal of one of those senile gallants whom Molière delights to paint. The comic element comes not only from the incongruity of the amorous old suitor, Sganarelle, and the coquettish young girl, Dorimène, but also from the fact that the butt of the piece discovers his mistake before marriage, into which he is nevertheless forced with the full knowledge of the fate that is awaiting him. As he is too old to fight a duel with Dorimène's brother, he has to accept the consequences of his having asked for the girl in marriage. The ending of the play, in which Sganarelle has to keep absolutely silent when Dorimène's father gives her hand to him, is considered one of the best "dénouements" of Molière.

Feuillet's "Le Village" is a subtle comedy of manners. There are only three main characters, all aged, over fifty-five; George Dupuis, a former notary living in the country; his wife; and Thomas Rouvière, an old bachelor who considers himself a much traveled man of the world. The two men had been friends in their youth in Paris many years before, and they had not seen each other until this visit of Rouvière to the home of the couple. The tranquil happiness of the husband and wife at first makes the visitor scornful, and he assumes a pitying attitude toward them. Rouvière talks about the food of foreign lands; they don't know about it; he mentions different plays; Dupuis is not familiar with them; at last, when he asks where he has traveled, the old notary answers, "J'ai fait mon tour de France dans mon jardin." Rouvière decides to

...the place of these little plays and their authors' ...
...to make them forget the little and the great of the day and the night ...
...by their being liked by the audience of the Double Theatre ...
...is a portrait of one of those little plays ...
...from before the time of the ...
...the importance of the author's mind, the importance ...
...young men, the importance, but also from the fact of the place ...
...distance the distance before the time of the ...
...forced with the full knowledge of the fact that is waiting him ...
...is too old to fight a duel with the brother, he has to accept the ...
...consequence of the having asked for the girl in marriage ...
...of the play, in which the importance of the ...
...Bontemps's father gives her hand to him, is considered one of the best ...
...of the ...
...The village is a noble comedy of manners ...
...only three main characters, all aged, over fifty-five; George ...
...a former mayor, living in the country; his wife; and Thomas ...
...an old bachelor who considers himself a much travelled man of the world ...
...The two men had been friends in their youth, in Paris many years before ...
...and they had not seen each other until this visit of Bontemps to the ...
...home of the couple ...
...first when the visitor appeared, and he became a lively ...
...former time ...
...now about it; he mentions different things; Bontemps is not ...
...then; at last, when he asks where he has travelled, the old mayor answers ...
...at this time he has been to France many times ...

get his friend out of this hum-drum domestic life and away from his wife whom he considers impossible. However, as the evening goes on, it is he who is won over by the evident happiness of the bourgeois home and the virtues of the humble provincial wife. In the last line of the play, he accepts with gratitude their invitation to stay with them, saying to Madame Dupuis, "Je connais par expérience les misères de l'exil; rappelez votre chatte."

"Chez l'Avocat" by Ferrier is called "une amusante blquette" by Gueullette in his collection of plays of the repertory of the Comédie Française. A young husband and wife, often played by Coquelin and S. Bernhardt to the delight of the public, are seeking a divorce and meet by chance at the same lawyer's. The wife, a young woman with a voluble tongue, makes it impossible for the lawyer to say anything. The speechless role of the lawyer is a difficult one to play and always affords amusement. Wedged in between the couple, he tries in vain to calm them, and although always on the point of speaking, he cannot articulate a word. This helplessness, with his pretentious gestures and complacent smile, is truly humorous.

In "Le Luthier de Crémone", Coppée has contributed a gem of lyricism to the French theater. The little play is not remarkable in psychology and thought, but it is entirely genuine and characteristic of his genius. In it the author shows his spirit of democracy and the interest that he has in humble life and people. This is to be seen in the motives of his characters.

The podesta of Crémone has bequeathed his gold chain to the artisan who would make the best violin, and the two pupils of Taddeo Ferrari, the master lute-maker, have resolved to win the prize. The thought of the

and his friend out of his two-story apartment life and away from his wife
when he considers himself. However, as the evening goes on, it is he
who is won over by the evident happiness of the bourgeois home and the
pleasant of the family provincial life. In the last line of the play, he
accepts this position and his position is set with them, saying to
Madame Thérèse, "I cannot see otherwise as I will; tomorrow
I will be there."

"The Frenchman" by Ibsen is called "The Marriage of Figaro" by
Christie in his collection of plays of the repertoire of the French stage.
A young husband and wife, often played by Gounon and A. Bernhardt,
to the delight of the public, are seeking a divorce and meet by chance at
the same lawyer. The wife, a young woman with a violent temper, whom
it is impossible for the lawyer to see anything. The spokesman role of the
lawyer is a difficult one to play and always affords amusement. Focused in
between the couple, he tries to calm them, and although always on
the point of breaking, he cannot utter a word. This helplessness,
with his pretensions and his violent wife, is truly humorous.
In "The Marriage of Figaro", Ibsen has introduced a new of Ibsen
to the French theater. The little play is not remarkable in psychology
and thought, but it is extremely funny and characteristic of the genre.
In it the author shows his spirit of democracy and the interest that he
has in human life and people. This is to be seen in the motives of his
characters.
The portrait of Gounon was described in a bold style to the reader
who would read the best volume, and the two motifs of French society, the
major and minor, have been used to win the prize. The strength of the

gold chain urges them on, doubtlessly, in their efforts, but what is more important is the fact that the master has promised his pretty daughter Giannina to the winner.

Of the two rivals Sandro is the less skillful, but the more handsome, and is preferred by Giannina. Filippo, on the contrary, who possesses all the secrets of his art, is a hunchback. This deformity is a sorrow to him, yet he thinks that he may have a chance to make Giannina happy, which is so beautifully expressed in the following lines:

"Quand je lui donnerai la belle chaîne d'or,
Quand elle sentira que de ce corps si frêle
La flamme du génie a pu jaillir pour elle,
Elle est fille d'artiste, elle aura la grandeur
En songeant au talent, d'oublier la laideur."

(Scene 6)

Giannina assures him with cruel frankness that she will never love him; that if the devine notes of his violin make her shed tears, it is because they assure to her the loss of Sandro. Filippo, determined to sacrifice himself to the happiness of his beloved, puts his violin, which he is sure will win the prize, into Sandro's case without the latter's knowledge. Sandro is to take both violins to the jury.

Sandro, on the way, is seized with jealousy and uses the same stratagem. Thus, Filippo wins definitely the podesta's gold chain, but, heroic to the end, he renounces the girl's hand, and is going to console himself in his art alone.

These curtain-raisers carry out the tradition that began with Molière of putting by the side of great five-act plays little plays that are sometimes "bouffonneries" like "Le Mariage forcé." Although the curtain-raiser comes before the play of the evening, it is often the impression

of this play rather than that of the longer one that remains with the playgoer at the end of the evening. It is easy to imagine that he remembers the comic situation of "Le Mariage forcé" or the charming little story of "Le Luthier de Crémone" with more pleasure than the more serious problem of a play like "Le Demi-Monde." This, undoubtedly, accounts for their continued popularity.

In summing up all the above conclusions, it is evident that the plays indicated by the table as being the most popular were worthy of being so, and that the criticisms of the repertory of the Comédie Française during the years 1870-1900 were unjust. The figures of the total number of performances of the classic plays speak for themselves and show that the Comédie Française indisputably adhered throughout this period to its tradition of presenting the works of the classic dramatists. The plays of Corneille, Racine, and Molière outnumber those of any three contemporary writers.

An analysis of the reasons for the popularity of certain representative contemporary plays indicates in each case that the qualities of the writers of these plays merited for them their places among the top-ranking men. To give a real and instructive picture of the life of the period is an essential feature of good theater. The plays of Augier and Dumas fils give a very realistic depiction of the social conditions and problems of the Second Empire and the period following the Franco-Prussian war. The moralistic qualities of these men gave to their audiences the mental stimulation that was so necessary at this time. Bornier, on the other hand, offered in his verse drama a relaxation from these serious problems, but in an equally worthy manner; the noble lines of his plays were a great contribution to the spirit of patriotism with which France was imbued after the war of 1870-71.

The curtain-raisers, also, had certain qualities and characteristics which won for them their popularity. Although they were short and were intended only as preliminary entertainment before the main production, they often possessed the same literary merits as the longer plays, and because of this made a definite contribution to the repertory.

Thus, the very qualities that made the plays in all of these groups popular are the ones that made them worthy of being in the repertory of 1870 to 1900. It seems conclusive, therefore, that the Comédie Française in this period continued to adhere to its tradition of producing only the best plays, both classic and contemporary, and of preserving them in its repertory. In view of this fact, the Comédie Française did become, in the words of Sarcey, a kind of museum where good pieces finally receive their consecration.

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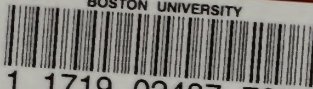
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